

## Organising Myself

### Transitioning to Secondary School

Here are some tips in preparing the child to go to secondary school:

- Visit the school: a map of the school may be helpful
- Look at the website for your child's new school regularly. This will ensure that they have some familiarity in what to expect at their secondary school. In addition, many secondary schools have online portals to allow parents/ students to check the homework they need to complete for the following day
- Practice reading school timetables. Spend some time with your child identifying and breaking them down:
  - The general structure of each day. For example: registration, two lessons then break, one lesson lunch, two lessons and then home time
  - That there are different lessons every day
  - That each lesson will be at a certain time within that day
  - That each lesson will be in a certain location around the school
  - That each lesson may have a certain teacher
- An activity that may help clarify their knowledge is quizzing students about a timetable. For example:
  - What lesson do you have on Monday at 9:30?
  - What time is morning break?
  - Where do you have to go for your English lesson on Friday?
  - Who teaches you Maths?
  - To make this activity more fun you could, for example, introduce a points system, rewards for getting the answers correct etc.
- Once your child starts to have a better understanding of a timetable, then progress onto map reading. This will help with reducing their anxiety if they are worried about getting lost or not being able to locate a specific area around school
- It may also be useful to go through the route they will take from home to school so they have some familiarity before the September start date
- Other activities they may enjoy and will support with map reading are treasure hunts and visiting local open houses/gardens/trails, where your child can use a map
- Do activities that focus on organising and taking responsibility for their own belongings e.g. bags, pencil cases, PE kits, pack lunches, homework. Again you could use quizzes to clarify your child's understanding of what equipment they need for different activities. Ask questions like 'what would you need if you went swimming?' 'What would you need if you went on a school trip?' 'What would you need if you had a maths lesson tomorrow?' 'When should you do homework if it is due in on Friday?'
  - Your child will likely be expected to record information about school relating to homework, school events, food required for cookery lessons etc. This is a skill that

requires memory, organisation and fine motor skills. To help develop these skills, play games that involve remembering a list of instructions:

- 'I went to the shop and bought...' This game starts with one child stating 'I went to the shops today and bought...' something beginning with A (e.g. apple). The next person continues by saying the previous item (apple) and then something beginning with B (e.g. banana). Continue around the class, working through the alphabet, adding one more item to the end of the list each time
- Wearing a new uniform may come with some new functional challenges. For example: Wearing a tie, having more complex buttons, doing own hair and wearing a different PE kit. It is important to look at the new uniform and practice wearing it prior to starting school
- Encourage the child to 'adopt a buddy' to assist him/her getting from class to class i.e. a **consistent friend of.....**
- Encourage the child to focus on various landmarks around the school and make relations between rooms i.e. Art is next to the woodwork room at the top of the stairs
- Keep a timetable on the wall at home, as well as in the school bag
- A wipe board fixed to the wall may also be a useful memory guide
- Use of a memory book/diary may help. Encourage writing down or drawing of key things she/he needs to remember
- When having to write a long piece of written work, speaking it aloud and recording it may help to retain ideas
- Use different colours on your timetable to indicate days and subjects. Lamination of the timetable is recommended.

Encourage your child to choose a school bag which has compartments and emphasise the importance of keeping things in the same place for ease of retrieval